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Macroeconomic policy questions: science and technology for development

Report of the Second Committee*

Rapporteur: Ms. Jana Simonová (Czech Republic)

I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 95 (c) (see A/56/558, para. 2). Action on sub-item (c) was taken at the 11th, 12th, 39th and 40th meetings, on 12 October and 11 and 12 December 2001. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/56/SR.11, 12, 39 and 40).

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolutions A/C.2/56/L.2 and A/C.2/56/L.67

2. At the 12th meeting, on 12 October, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Science and technology for development" (A/C.2/56/L.2), which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recognizing* the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in coordinating the activities of the United Nations system in the area of science and technology for development,

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in five parts, under the symbol A/56/558 and Add.1-4.

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"*Cognizant* of the role of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as the secretariat responsible for the substantive servicing of the Commission,

"*Bearing in mind* the cross-cutting nature of science and technology within the United Nations system and the need, inter alia, for effective policy guidance and better coordination,

"*Recognizing* the importance of establishing and strengthening partnership and networking among the public and private sectors and academic institutions of the South and the North to build, transfer and strengthen the technological capabilities and skills needed for developing countries,

"*Stressing* that the pace of globalization is influenced in large measure by the development of science and technology and that developing countries should be assisted in becoming well equipped with the knowledge of science and technology and the practical skills associated with technology management so as to enable them to benefit from the opportunities offered by globalization and avoid the risk of their marginalization in the process of globalization,

"*Recognizing* the central role of information and communication technologies in creating a global knowledge-based economy, in accelerating growth, raising competitiveness, promoting sustainable development, eradicating poverty and facilitating the effective integration of all countries into the global economy,

"*Recognizing also* the need for dissemination of research knowledge and sharing of technologies and expertise in the field of biotechnology, in particular in the areas of agriculture, pharmaceuticals and health care, that could benefit mankind,

"*Welcoming* the establishment of the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, which will play a leadership and catalytic role in bridging the digital divide, fostering digital opportunity and firmly putting information and communication technology at the service of development for all so as to achieve the internationally agreed development goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration,

"*Taking note* of the report of the Secretary-General,

"1. *Decides* that the Commission on Science and Technology for Development should meet annually;

"2. *Requests* the Commission to establish an open-ended working group for the purpose of analysing ways and means of improving the role and participation of the Commission in the recommendation and policy-making process of the United Nations system on issues of science and technology, with the aim of working towards the strengthening of the Commission;

"3. *Welcomes* the proposal of the Commission on a study of the feasibility of establishing an international mechanism for supporting and enhancing research and development within the developing countries and in areas critical to the developing countries, especially in the fields of health, education and agriculture;

"4. *Stresses* the importance of facilitating access to and the transfer of technology to developing countries on concessional terms, in particular in knowledge-intensive sectors, with the objective of enhancing their technological capacities, capabilities, productivity and competitiveness in the world market;

"5. *Emphasizes* the need to reduce regulatory limitations on the transfer of technology, in particular to developing countries, and stresses the importance of identifying barriers to and unjustifiable restrictions on the transfer of technologies, inter alia, with a view to addressing such constraints while creating specific incentives, fiscal and otherwise, for the transfer of technologies, including new and innovative ones;

"6. *Calls upon* the United Nations system to integrate the Commission on Science and Technology in its role as the coordinator of scientific and technological activities into upcoming events and their preparatory processes, such as the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held at Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2 to 11 September 2002, the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society, the first to be held at Geneva in 2003 and the second at Tunis in 2005, the work of the Information and Communication Technology Task Force and the follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summit meetings;

"7. *Also calls upon* the Secretary-General to strengthen the Commission and its secretariat within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development secretariat by providing it with the necessary resources to enable it better to carry out its mandate of assisting the developing countries with their national development efforts in the field of science and technology;

"8. *Further calls upon* the United Nations system and the donor community to strengthen activities in South-South cooperation, so that the developing countries, which face similar challenges, can share their experiences;

"9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, at its fifty-eighth session, a report on the present constraints to the access to knowledge and technology, as well as on possible ways and means of improving the transfer of knowledge and technology to developing countries."

3. At the 40th meeting, on 12 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Felix Mbayu (Cameroon), introduced a draft resolution entitled "Science and technology for development" (A/C.2/56/L.67), which he submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.2.

4. At the same meeting, the Secretary of the Committee read out a statement on the conference servicing implications of the draft resolution (see A/C.2/56/SR.40).

5. Also at the 40th meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.67 (see para. 12, draft resolution I).

6. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.67, draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.2 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

B. Draft resolutions A/C.2/56/L.3 and A/C.2/56/L.52

7. At the 11th meeting, on 12 October, the representative of Tunisia introduced a draft resolution entitled "World Summit on the Information Society" (A/C.2/56/L.3). Subsequently, the Russian Federation and Mauritania joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recognizing* the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology for promoting the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and to find effective and innovative ways to put this potential at the service of development for all,

"*Recognizing* the pivotal role of the United Nations system in promoting development, particularly with respect to access to and transfer of technology, especially information and communication technologies and services, inter alia through partnerships with all relevant stakeholders,

"*Convinced* of the need, at the highest political level, to marshal the global consensus and commitment required to promote the urgently needed access of all countries to information, knowledge and communication technologies for development so as to reap the full benefits of the information and communication technology revolution, and to address the whole range of relevant issues related to the information society, through the development of a common vision and understanding of the information society and the adoption of a declaration and a plan of action for implementation by Governments, international institutions and all sectors of civil society,

"*Recalling* the contributions to international consensus in this field achieved by the Millennium Declaration as well as the agreements reached at other international conferences and summits in recent years,

"*Noting* the action plan presented by the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union to the Administrative Committee on Coordination for the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society and the creation, by the Administrative Committee on Coordination, of a High-level Summit Organizing Committee, chaired by the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union and consisting of the heads of those United Nations and other international organizations interested in participating in the process leading to the Summit,

"*Considering* that the Summit is to be convened under the patronage of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the International Telecommunication Union taking the lead role in its preparation in cooperation with interested United Nations and other international agencies and the host countries,

"*Recalling* the ministerial declaration concerning information and communication technologies adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2000 and the subsequent work done in this regard, including the creation of the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, as well as the welcoming by the Council in 2001 of the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society,

"*Recognizing* the need to harness synergies and to create cooperation among the various Information and Communication Technologies initiatives, at the regional and global level, currently being undertaken or planned to promote and foster the potential of Information and Communication Technologies for development by other international organizations and civil society,

"1. *Endorses* the resolution adopted by the Council of the International Telecommunication Union at its 2001 session, in which it endorsed the approach proposed by the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union of holding the Summit at the highest possible level in two phases, the first at Geneva in 2003 and the second at Tunis in 2005, pursuant to resolution 73 (Minneapolis 1998) of the Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union;

"2. *Invites* Governments to participate actively in the preparations for the Summit conducted by the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union as Chairman of the High-level Summit Organizing Committee, and to be represented at the level of heads of State or Government;

"3. *Encourages* effective contributions from and the active participation of all relevant United Nations bodies, in particular the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, and encourages other intergovernmental organizations, including international and regional institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector to cooperate actively with the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union in preparing for the Summit;

"4. *Invites* the international community to make voluntary contributions to the special trust fund established by the International Telecommunication Union to support the preparations for and the holding of the Summit, as well as to facilitate the effective participation of representatives of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in regional meetings in the second half of 2002, in the preparatory meetings to be held in the spring of 2002 and in the spring and autumn of 2003, respectively, and in the Summit itself;

"5. *Invites* the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, through the Economic and Social Council, for information, a report on the preparations for the Summit."

8. At the 39th meeting, on 11 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Felix Mbayu (Cameroon), introduced a draft resolution entitled "World Summit on the Information Society" (A/C.2/56/L.52), which he submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.3.

9. At the same meeting, the Secretary of the Committee read out an oral revision to operative paragraph 3, whereby operative paragraph 3 was replaced with the following:

"3. *Invites* the International Telecommunication Union to assume the leading managerial role in the executive secretariat of the Summit and its preparatory process".

10. Also at the 39th meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.52, as orally revised (see para. 12, draft resolution II).

11. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.52, draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.3 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendations of the Second Committee

12. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I
Science and technology for development

The General Assembly,

Recognizing the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in coordinating the activities of the United Nations system in the area of science and technology for development,

Cognizant of the role of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as the secretariat responsible for the substantive servicing of the Commission,

Bearing in mind the cross-cutting nature of science and technology within the United Nations system and the need, inter alia, for effective policy guidance and better coordination,

Recognizing the importance of establishing and strengthening partnership and networking among the public and private sectors and academic institutions of all countries to build, transfer and strengthen the technological capabilities and skills needed, in particular for developing countries,

Stressing that the pace of globalization is influenced in large measure by the development of science and technology, and that developing countries and countries with economies in transition need to become well equipped, inter alia, through international assistance, with the knowledge of science and technology and the practical skills and institutional structures associated with technology management, which are among the essential tools for enabling them to benefit from the opportunities offered by globalization and avoid the risk of marginalization in the process of globalization,

Recognizing the need to address the obstacles faced by developing countries in accessing technologies, while taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights and the special needs of developing countries,

Recognizing also that information and communication technologies are among the critical determinants for creating a global knowledge-based economy, accelerating growth, raising competitiveness, promoting sustainable development, eradicating poverty and facilitating the effective integration of all countries into the global economy,

Recognizing further the need for dissemination of research knowledge, technologies and expertise in the field of biotechnology, in particular in the areas of agriculture, pharmaceuticals and health care, that could benefit mankind,

Welcoming the establishment of the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, which will provide overall leadership to the United Nations role in helping to formulate strategies for the development of information and communication technologies, and under whose initiative the United Nations will lend a truly global dimension to efforts to bridge the global digital divide, foster digital opportunity and thus firmly put information and communication technologies in the service of development for all, while bearing in mind the power of information and communication technologies for advancing the internationally agreed development goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[1]

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordinating role of the Commission in support of efforts by developing countries to benefit from science and technology,[2]

1. *Invites* the Economic and Social Council to consider, no later than its substantive session of 2002, ways and means to strengthen the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, inter alia, through increasing the frequency of its meetings, including their annualization, and through the implementation of the recommendations set out in the report of the Secretary-General, while taking its mandate and budgetary constraints into consideration, and in that regard takes note of the recommendation of the Commission to the Council that the Commission should meet annually;[3]

2. *Also invites* the Economic and Social Council to consider favourably the request of the Commission to establish a working group, to meet during the regular sessions of the Commission, for the purpose of evaluating the work of the Commission, with a view to strengthening the Commission's role in the United Nations system in the area of science and technology for development and increasing its effectiveness;

3. *Stresses* the importance of facilitating access to and transfer of knowledge and technology on concessional, preferential and favourable terms to the developing countries, as mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights and the special needs of developing countries, with the objective of enhancing their technological capacities, capabilities, productivity and competitiveness in the world market;

4. *Also stresses* the need for all Governments to ensure the necessary conditions, including the creation of transparent legal and regulatory frameworks, to facilitate the acquisition and development of technology, to enhance innovation capacity, to improve the absorptive capacity of local enterprises and to build up supply capabilities;

5. *Further stresses* the importance of identifying and tackling barriers to and unjustifiable restrictions on the transfer of technologies, in particular to

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[1] See resolution 55/2.

[2] A/56/96-E/2001/87.

[3] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 11* (E/2001/31), chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution III, para. 1.

developing countries, inter alia, with a view to addressing such constraints while creating specific incentives for the transfer of technologies, including new and innovative ones;

6. *Encourages* the United Nations system to take advantage of the coordinating role and expertise of the Commission in the area of science and technology for development, where possible, in the follow-up to and preparation for major international conferences and summits;

7. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to continue to ensure that the Commission and its secretariat within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development are provided with the necessary resources to enable it to better carry out its mandate;

8. *Takes note* of the proposal of the Commission on a study of the feasibility of establishing an international mechanism for supporting and enhancing research and development within the developing countries and in areas critical to the developing countries, especially in the fields of health, education and agriculture;[4]

9. *Calls upon* the United Nations system and the international community to strengthen South-South cooperation initiatives, as well as subregional and regional cooperation, in the field of science and technology;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, at its fifty-eighth session, a report on the impact of new biotechnologies, with particular attention to sustainable development, including food security, health and economic productivity, with the inclusion of proposals on the aspects of the transfer of such technologies, in particular to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, while taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights and the special needs of developing countries, as well as on addressing constraints on the adequate utilization of such technologies.

Draft resolution II
World Summit on the Information Society

The General Assembly,

Recognizing the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology for promoting the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[5] and to find effective and innovative ways to put this potential at the service of development for all,

Recognizing also the pivotal role of the United Nations system in promoting development, particularly with respect to access to and transfer of technology, especially information and communication technologies and services, inter alia, through partnerships with all relevant stakeholders,

Convinced of the need, at the highest political level, to marshal the global consensus and commitment required to promote the urgently needed access of all countries to information, knowledge and communication technologies for development so as to reap the full benefits of the information and communication

[4] Ibid., draft resolution III, para. 3.

[5] See resolution 55/2.

technologies revolution, and to address the whole range of relevant issues related to the information society, through the development of a common vision and understanding of the information society and the adoption of a declaration and plan of action for implementation by Governments, international institutions and all sectors of civil society,

Recalling the contributions to international consensus in this field achieved by the Millennium Declaration and the agreements reached at other international conferences and summits in recent years,

Taking note of the action plan presented by the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union to the Administrative Committee on Coordination for the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society and the creation, by the Administrative Committee on Coordination, of a high-level Summit organizing committee, chaired by the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union and consisting of the heads of those United Nations and other international organizations interested in participating in the process leading to the Summit,

Considering that the Summit is to be convened under the patronage of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with the International Telecommunication Union taking the lead role in its preparation, in cooperation with interested United Nations and other international agencies and the host countries,

Recalling the ministerial declaration concerning information and communication technologies, adopted by the Economic and Social Council at the high-level segment of its substantive session of 2000,[6] and the subsequent work done in this regard, including the creation of the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, as well as the welcoming of the forthcoming Summit by the Council in its agreed conclusions 2001/1,[7]

Recognizing the need to harness synergies and to create cooperation among the various information and communication technologies initiatives, at the regional and global levels, currently being undertaken or planned so as to promote and foster the potential of information and communication technologies for development by other international organizations and civil society,

1. *Welcomes* the resolution adopted by the Council of the International Telecommunication Union at its 2001 session, in which the Council endorsed the proposal of the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union to hold the Summit at the highest possible level in two phases, the first in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003 and the second in Tunis in 2005, pursuant to resolution 73 (Minneapolis, 1998) of the Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union;

2. *Recommends* that the preparation for the Summit take place through an open-ended intergovernmental preparatory committee, which would define the agenda of the Summit, finalize both the draft declaration and the draft plan of

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[6] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/55/3/Rev.1), chap. III, para. 17.

[7] Ibid., *Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/56/3/Rev.1), chap. V, agreed conclusions 2001/1, para. 7.

action, and decide on the modalities of the participation of other stakeholders in the Summit;

3. *Invites* the International Telecommunication Union to assume the leading managerial role in the executive secretariat of the Summit and its preparatory process;

4. *Invites* Governments to participate actively in the preparatory process of the Summit and to be represented in the Summit at the highest possible level;

5. *Encourages* effective contributions from and the active participation of all relevant United Nations bodies, in particular the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, and encourages other intergovernmental organizations, including international and regional institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector, to contribute to, and actively participate in, the intergovernmental preparatory process of the Summit and the Summit itself;

6. *Invites* the international community to make voluntary contributions to the special trust fund established by the International Telecommunication Union to support the preparations for and the holding of the Summit, as well as to facilitate the effective participation of representatives of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in the regional meetings to be held in the second half of 2002, in the preparatory meetings to be held in the first half of 2002 and in 2003, and in the Summit itself;

7. *Invites* the Secretary-General of the United Nations to inform all heads of State and government of the adoption of the present resolution;

8. *Invites* the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union to submit to the General Assembly, at its fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth sessions, through the Economic and Social Council, for information, a report on the preparations for the Summit.